

# 英语习语文化研究及双语词典对习语文化信息的处理

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## 研究目的：

了解英语习语与其形成的文化背景之间的关系，以及了解英语习语的文化背景与理解、掌握习语之间的联系。旨在指导双语词典编纂过程中对习语的描写，使之更有效地帮助外语学习者学习、掌握习语。

## 论文概要：

习语是一个民族智慧与经验的结晶，有很强的民族性。但习语一直是外语学习中的一个难点。这是因为，习语的实义难以从其字面义上推出，外语学习者往往难以得其门而入。本论文从语言与文化的关系出发，指出习语的形成有其特定的历史文化背景，而了解习语的文化背景有助于学习者掌握习语的内涵。这是因为，虽然习语的实义难以从其字面义上推出，但二者之间关系密切。了解习语的字面义及其形成的文化背景有助于更确切地理解其实义（即喻义）。本论文还指出了习语具有转换能力，这种转换能力对学习者掌握习语提出了更高的要求，而了解习语的文化背景有利于学习者掌握与运用习语的变体形式。论文的后部分是对前部分理论的补充与运用，即在双语词典编纂中如何在描写习语时恰到好处地提供习语的文化信息。这部分考虑到了读者的需求及词典使用能力。论文从三方面着手，即习语的释义、例证与文化注释，提出如何恰当地提供文化信息，使词典更有效地帮助读者掌握习语，进一步实现其使用价值。首先，论文总结了双语词典编纂中几种对习语的主要释译方式，指出如何在寻找对应词时使源语的文化色彩与译语的习惯表达结合起来。其次，提出在提供例句时可先考虑从实际语言材料中选择，这样更能反映习语所在的文化环境；另外在翻译例证时应尽量保持习语在语境中，在特定的文化氛围中的生动效果。第三，指出在提供文化注释（主要指词源及语用信息）时，如何精炼、又不失生动地提供与习语的形成有关的文化信息，使之即能提高读者的学习兴趣，又能帮助其正确掌握习语的内涵。

# Cultural Study on English Idioms & Lexicographical Treatment of Cultural Information in Bilingual Dictionaries

## OUTLINE

**Lin Pang**

- ◆ **Problem for solution:** Find ways for Chinese learners to overcome the obstacle in idiom learning and get a better command of English idioms through cultural acknowledgement
- ◆ **Way of solution:** Provide cultural information adequately in bilingual dictionaries
- ◆ **Focus:** Study the relationship between idiom and culture and how they can be associated for better understanding; how much and how specific cultural information for describing idioms in bilingual dictionaries should be provided
- ◆ **Introduction**

### Chapter 1 Aim of Study

- ✧ Use of idiom: understanding of foreign tongue, appreciation of world piece, more successful communication
- ✧ Learning problems: unpredictability of idiom meaning, cultural specificity

### Chapter 2 Idiomaticity and cultural background

- ✧ Idiomaticity: compositeness, institutionalization, semantic opacity
- ✧ Language & culture: shaped and be shaped by each other  
Language & idiom: essence, effective device for expression  
Idiom & culture: a form of speech peculiar to a nation

**Chapter 3 Source of English idioms:** Bible, world famous works, historical stories and legends, customs and superstitions, professions and works, animals, proper names, human body

### Chapter 4 Literal meaning and idiomatic meaning:

#### association

- ✧ Figures of speech: simile, metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, euphemism, allusion, etc.
- ✧ Association between literal meaning and idiomatic meaning:  
Understanding literal meaning → Understanding idiomatic meaning  
E.g. *to get the sack*  
to get the bag (literal) – vehicle/image  
(to have one's things ready to leave) – similarity/element of resemblance  
to be fired (idiomatic) – tenor/object

**Chapter 5 Cultural factors in selection of vehicles: selection**  
**of vehicles is determined by cultural factors; cultural**  
**acknowledgement can help learners with the association**  
**of literal meaning and idiomatic meaning (e.g. *to get out***  
***of the wrong side of the bed* – to start the day in a bad**  
**mood)**

- ✧ Natural environment, historical development, custom and tradition, entertainment, religious belief

**Chapter 6 What is expected of a dictionary for description of**  
**idioms: transition from theory to practice**

- ✧ Dictionaries in priority: special-purpose dictionary, bilingual dictionary
- ✧ Transformation deficiency: another problem
- ✧ Inclusion of cultural information: for correct understanding and proper use  
e.g. *to fight like **Kilkenny** cats*  
*It was a Kilkenny fight.* →  
*They looked like Kilkenny cats, ready to fight to death.*  
*The city became *another Kilkenny* when the rabble collided with the police.*

**Chapter 7 Provision of cultural information in bilingual**  
**dictionaries**

- ✧ Through translational equivalent
  - Principles: correctness, elegance, comprehensibility
  - Approaches:
    1. Literal translation (semantic equivalence + functional effect)
      - Absolute equivalent: *to strike while the iron is hot* -- 趁热打铁
      - No counterpart, but understood easily: *crocodile tears* -- 鳄鱼的眼泪
      - No counterpart, but familiar to readers: *ivory tower* -- 象牙塔
    2. Free translation (functional effect > semantic equivalence): *ins and outs* -- 来龙去脉, *one's name is mud* -- 名声扫地, *goose-flesh* -- 鸡皮疙瘩
    3. Literal translation + free translation (cultural elements + comprehensibility): *the sword of Damocles* -- 达摩克利斯之剑; 临头的危险, *the new Jerusalem* -- 新耶路撒冷; 理想的境地
    4. Literal translation + explanatory notes (semantic equivalence + pragmatic usage): *snap one's finger at* -- 打梆子 (向人捻拇指作响, 表示轻蔑, 不在乎等), *another place* -- (在下院指) 上院; (在上院指) 下

院；（在剑桥指）牛津；在（牛津指）剑桥

✧ Through exemplification

- Quotation: more informative, instructive and interesting

Ensure authority and precision: authoritative writings, evidence of live use

Appeal to the reader: collected through various channels

Reflect cultural elements: live material, social behavior

- ✧ Through cultural notes: etymology, pragmatic usage

➤ Functions: help with understanding, stimulate interest, expand knowledge

- Description of cultural notes: how much, how specific

Bilingual dictionary for general purpose: avoid misunderstanding

Bilingual dictionary of idioms (source, cultural background, pragmatic usage): more informative (simple, helpful, relevant)

**Chapter 8 Conclusion:** reiteration of the importance of cultural information

# **Cultural Study on English Idioms & Lexicographical Treatment of Cultural Information in Bilingual Dictionaries**

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## **Synopsis**

The present thesis starts in the early chapters with a preliminary job on the explanation of the relationship between idiom -- an indispensable element of language -- and culture with a wish to consolidate the status of cultural acknowledgement in learning English idioms. In the later chapters, approaches are offered to help cope with the treatment of cultural information in the lexicographical description of English idioms in bilingual dictionaries primarily intended for foreign learners, English-Chinese dictionaries, for instance, as the thesis focuses upon. The points of view of the present author are manifested in the following eight chapters.

Chapter 1 begins with the clarification of the aim for the cultural study of English idioms. That is, to explore a good access into proper understanding and use of English idioms popular in all walks of life in the English-speaking world. English idioms are widely used, but they are difficult to grasp for foreign learners, and the dictionary compiler is sure to encounter the hard task of describing English idioms in the microstructure of the dictionary ready to help.

Chapter 2, after a brief argument on the relationship between language and culture, probes into the close relationship between the basic feature of an idiom -- semantic opacity and the cultural background that nurtures the formation of the idiom.

Chapter 3 offers a brief account of the main sources of English idioms. Many an idiom has a story of its own, and English idioms came into their current use through the following channels: *the Bible*, world's famous works, historical stories and legends, customs and superstitions, professions and works, animals, proper names and human body.

In Chapter 4 space is consumed for the embodiment of the interrelation between the literal meaning of an idiom and its idiomatic meaning, which appears in forms of figures of speech: simile, metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, euphemism, allusion and so on. The presentation of this interrelation serves to unmask the mystery of association, especially recessive association, between understanding the implied meaning of an idiom and its literal construction in idiom learning, which has proved to be problematic for many foreign learners.

After stating the interrelation between the literal meaning and the idiomatic meaning of an idiom in Chapter 4, Chapter 5 comes to the cultural factors that determine the selection of vehicles as a composing element in figures of speech. The cultural factors that help to form English idioms are mainly as follows: natural environment, historical development, custom and tradition, entertainment, religious belief.

The previous five chapters present the basic theory on the relationship between English idioms and the English culture. In the following two chapters the focal point is the lexicographical treatment of English idioms in bilingual dictionaries, say, English-Chinese dictionaries.

Chapter 6 raises the question of “what is expected of a dictionary for description of idioms” as far as cultural information is concerned. This chapter analyzes briefly the functions of general dictionaries, special-purpose dictionaries, monolingual dictionaries, and bilingual dictionaries with an intention to present the status of idioms in the above dictionaries respectively. After this, words are said about the types of transformation -- substitution, addition, permutation, deletion etc. -- in English idioms as evident of the difficulty in correct understanding and use of idioms, the purpose of which is to reiterate the importance of including cultural information in the dictionaries concerned.

Chapter 7 suggests a tentative approach to the provision of cultural information in bilingual dictionaries in describing English idioms from three perspectives, namely, translational definition, exemplification and cultural notes.

Chapter 8, followed by a bibliography, draws a general conclusion on the subject being discussed while confirming the importance of cultural study of English idioms.

**Key words:** idiom, culture, dictionary

## Abbreviation

<i>BDPF</i>	<i>Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase &amp; Fable</i>
<i>CDEIP</i>	<i>A Comprehensive Dictionary of English Idioms and Phrases</i> (《综合英语成语词典》)
<i>CIDI</i>	<i>Cambridge International Dictionary of Idioms</i>
<i>COD</i>	<i>Concise Oxford Dictionary</i>
<i>DAI</i>	<i>A Dictionary of American Idioms</i>
<i>DCIE</i>	<i>A Dictionary of Current Idiomatic English</i> (《当代英语习语大词典》)
<i>DEI</i>	<i>A Dictionary of English Idioms</i> (《英语习语大词典》)
<i>ECD</i>	<i>English-Chinese Dictionary</i> (《英汉大词典》)
<i>LDEI</i>	<i>Longman Dictionary of English Idioms</i>
<i>LECDEI</i>	<i>Longman English-Chinese Dictionary of English Idioms</i> (《朗文英汉双解英语成语辞典》)
<i>LDOCE</i>	<i>Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English</i>
<i>NECD</i>	<i>New English-Chinese Dictionary</i> (《新英汉词典》)
<i>OALD</i>	<i>Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary</i>
<i>ODCIE</i>	<i>Oxford Dictionary of Current Idiomatic English</i>
<i>OED</i>	<i>Oxford English Dictionary</i>
<i>POD</i>	<i>Pocket Oxford Dictionary</i>
<i>RHD</i>	<i>Random House Dictionary</i>
<i>W3</i>	<i>Webster Third New International Dictionary</i>
<i>WNWD</i>	<i>Webster New World Dictionary</i>
<i>WNCD</i>	<i>Webster New College Dictionary</i>

## **Table of Content**

Synopsis .....	i
Abbreviation .....	iii
Introduction ....	1
Chapter 1 Aim of study .....	2
1.1 Use of idiom .....	2
1.2 Idiom learning: a consideration .....	3
1.3 Compiler's task .....	4
Chapter 2 Idiomaticity and cultural background .....	4
2.1 What is idiom .....	4
2.2 What is culture .....	5
2.3 Idiom and culture: a relationship .....	6
Chapter 3 Source of English idioms .....	7
3.1 Bible .....	7
3.2 World's famous works .....	8
3.3 Historical stories and Legends .....	10
3.4 Customs and superstitions .....	10
3.5 Professions and works .....	11
3.6 Animals .....	12
3.7 Proper names .....	13
3.8 Human body .....	13
Chapter 4 Literal meaning and idiomatic meaning .....	14
4.1 Figures of speech .....	14
4.1.1 Simile .....	15
4.1.2 Metaphor .....	15
4.1.3 Metonymy .....	15
4.1.4 Synecdoche .....	16
4.1.5 Euphemism .....	16
4.1.6 Allusion .....	16
4.1.7 Other forms .....	17
4.2 Understanding idiomatic meaning through association .....	17
4.2.1 Literal meaning .....	17
4.2.2 Idiomatic meaning .....	17
4.2.3 An association .....	18
Chapter 5 Cultural factors in selection of vehicles .....	19
5.1 Natural environment .....	20
5.2 Historical development .....	21
5.3 Custom and tradition .....	22
5.4 Entertainment .....	23
5.5 Religious belief .....	24



5.6 Conclusion .....	25
Chapter 6 What is expected of a dictionary for description of idioms	25
6.1 Dictionaries in consideration .....	25
6.1.1 General dictionary vs. special-purpose dictionary .....	26
6.1.2 Monolingual dictionary vs. bilingual dictionary .....	27
6.2 Transformation deficiency and learner's problem .....	29
6.2.1 Transformation .....	29
6.2.1.1 Substitution .....	30
6.2.1.2 Addition .....	30
6.2.1.3 Permutation .....	31
6.2.1.4 Deletion .....	31
6.2.1.5 Other forms .....	31
6.2.2 Correct understanding and use .....	32
Chapter 7 Provision of cultural information in bilingual dictionaries	33
7.1 Through translational equivalent .....	33
7.1.1 Translating problems .....	33
7.1.2 Principles of translation .....	35
7.1.3 Types of translation .....	36
7.1.3.1 Literal translation .....	36
7.1.3.2 Free translation .....	37
7.1.3.3 Literal translation + free translation .....	38
7.1.3.4 Literal translation + explanatory notes .....	39
7.2 Through exemplification .....	39
7.2.1 Function and approach .....	39
7.2.2 Quotation: a priority .....	40
7.2.3 Translation of examples .....	43
7.3 Through cultural notes .....	44
7.3.1 Use of cultural notes .....	44
7.3.2 Length, space and message .....	47
Chapter 8 Conclusion .....	51
Bibliography .....	52

# **Cultural Study on English Idioms & Lexicographical Treatment of Cultural Information in Bilingual Dictionaries**

## **Introduction**

In the rich stock of the English language, idioms, as a product of wit and wisdom, are the very element that particularly represents the spirit of the English nationality. English idioms came into being when the English-speaking people were in search of precise and humorous expressions; they are marked with the English national characters because they are a brainchild of the nation's experience and outlook and are associated with the certain cultural settings of their formation. Therefore, the study of English idioms cannot proceed without a careful study of the cultural background in which idioms were given birth to.

English idioms have been a difficult part of English language learning for foreign learners, Chinese learners, for instance, due to the fact that the meaning of an idiom is not merely the combination of its components. Many an English idiom conveys an image and possesses a figurative sense, which often blocks the access of many Chinese learners to correct understanding and appropriate use. The formation of an idiom and the association between the image and the implied meaning are acted on the conception of the people who create it. Therefore, the difficulty in idiom learning can be mitigated to great extent through cultural acknowledgement.

The description of English idioms in bilingual dictionaries, say, English-Chinese dictionaries, as the present thesis is dealing with, is designated the role of ensuring a gateway to correct understanding of English idioms for Chinese learners by adequate provision of cultural information. This task is hard and tough. It demands a possession of sensitivity, strong will, consistency and a good command of both English and Chinese language -- these two languages belong to different families and the cultures they are tied with represent respectively the two major cultures of the world: the oriental culture and the western culture.

The present thesis ventures to make a study of English idioms from two major perspectives, roughly, how English idiom is associated with English culture and how to provide cultural information in bilingual description of English idioms as an aid to

idiom learning.

## Chapter 1

### Aim of Study

#### 1.1 Use of idiom

English idioms are used frequently by English-speaking people for one thing that idioms are full of wits and humor; they make speech more expressive and interesting with the vivid image they carry and the philosophical meaning they convey; and for the other that they sound pleasant to the ear with the use of alliteration, repetition, rhythm as in *no pains, no gains, out of side, out of mind, at sixes and sevens, by hook or by crook*, for instance. Idioms are widely used in all walks of life: in literature, men of letters such as Shakespeare, Dryden, Addison, Swift, Dickens excel in adding to their language extra power with idioms; in scientific and political reports, idioms are used to make the writing more expressive and precise; in daily life, people say them to make their speech witty and humorous.

Mastery of English idioms offers an easier access to the understanding of the native tongue, either in speech or in writing. Many foreign learners of English are often frustrated by their incapability of appreciating the works of well-known writers; those going abroad find themselves totally aliens in the new surroundings in which people speak a language queer and quite unlike the one they were learning at home. The reasons are native speakers have a favor to use idioms that they think add vigor to their speech. The more English idioms the foreign learner knows, the better he understands the native speaker, and the deeper he looks into the essence of the world piece.

A good grasp of English idioms is not only an aid to the appreciation of good writings but a bridge leading to a more successful communication. Idioms never fail to identify whether a person speaks idiomatic English or not, for native speakers use them frequently either in speaking or in more serious writing whereas foreign learners are timid in using them, uncertain of their correct meaning and use. Foreign learners tend to be too serious and bookish and sometimes make native speakers feel ill at ease. A person using more idioms appears to be friendlier and is more likely to strike a good impression on the native listener. Compare the following two sentences:

- 1) I will **keep an eye on** the house for you when you are away.
- 2) I will **watch** the house for you when you are away.

No one will deny that the first sentence using the idiom *to keep an eye on* tends to be more idiomatic and witty while the second sentence seems to be plain and

uninteresting. As it is pointed out in the introduction to the third edition of *DAI* (Makkai, 1995:VII):

If a person always uses a bookish, stilted expression and never uses an idiom in the right place, he might develop the reputation of being a dry, unimaginative speaker, or one who is trying to be too serious and too official. The use of idioms is, therefore, extremely important. It can strike a chord of solidarity with the listener. The more idioms you use in the right context, the more at ease Americans will feel with you and the more they will think to themselves ‘this is a nice and friendly person -- look at how well he expresses himself!’

## 1.2 Idiom learning: a consideration

Learning English idioms is the most difficult part of learning English as a foreign language for several reasons, one of which is the unpredictability of idiom meaning -- the seeming unrelatedness between the composing parts of an idiom and its actual meaning as a whole. In other words, the implied meaning of an idiom cannot be derived from the individual meaning of its composing words. It is a rare case that a foreign learner can identify the meaning of the idiom *to miss the boat* at one look for this idiom can be possibly understood by him in the true sense of the words just as he understands “to miss the train” or “to miss the plane”, which are actually not idioms.

Idioms are highly culturally marked and many an idiom has its own history of formation and development; the actual meaning of an idiom is closely associated with the cultural background in which it was born. This makes the understanding of idioms more difficult. There are good chances that a foreign learner encounters some culture-specific idioms such as *in the arms of Morpheus*, *to nail to the pillory*, *last supper*, *to go to Davy Jones’s locker*, *John Hancock*, *John Bull* etc. which are related to the historical or biblical allusions, and finds he is surrounded by a totally strange cultural environment alienated from that of his motherland. Therefore, better understanding and more appropriate use of an idiom can be ensured only after the learner is informed of the cultural background the idiom is rooted in.

It is said in *Introduction to LDEI* (Long, 1979: viii), “The metaphorical meaning of some idioms is easier to understand when one knows how it developed.” Language does not develop from thin air, nor do idioms that reflect the patterned ways of perceiving, evaluating, and acting of certain speech community. “Idiom...set up shared frames for perception, culturally transmitted boundaries with which individuals tacitly recognize or ignore patterns of phenomena” (Kuiper, 1991: 208). When a foreign learner comes into contact with idioms of the language he is learning, he comes into the engagement in the cultural study of the idioms. The better knowledge he gets of the latter, the better understanding and use of the former.

In the following chapters space will be consumed to argue how acquisition of cultural information of English idioms functions as a bridge between the peculiarities

of idiom and the learning of English idioms that has been proved to be problematic for Chinese learners.

### **1.3 Compiler's task**

A dictionary is not only expected to be a recorder of language; it is supposed to help the user with the decoding, or the encoding of a language and the enrichment of his knowledge of the world as well. Therefore, it's up to the dictionary compiler to decide what is really useful to the reader and what should be included in the dictionary he is to make. He should always keep the reader in mind and does everything for the reader's sake. The dictionary he makes should be relevant and adequate in information, and always ready to help.

English idioms are the most vital part to dictionary description of English language. They should be included as many as possible. An informative description of English idioms would be a good index to English culture; it's expected to help the reader to learn the language through cultural study or vice versa. The acknowledgement of cultural background for English idioms such as source, origin and etymology is an essential part in learning idioms due to the fact that idioms are deeply marked with national characters. Inclusion of cultural information in dictionary description of idioms, therefore, is an inescapable though hard task that the compiler is responsible for. The choice of item to be entered for the description of an idiom, however, depends on the planned size of the dictionary and its aim. The general dictionary is not always a satisfactory choice for consultation because it is not likely to include all the cultural information about an idiom with much more limited space, though adequate information is not unwelcome. For a special dictionary like a dictionary of idioms, on the other hand, it is all agreed on that sufficient information about the cultural background should not be slighted. In the course of dictionary compilation, the compiler has to experience hard time of determining how much cultural information is to be included in the dictionary he's compiling and how specific it should be to meet the needs of his prospective reader.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Idiomaticity and Cultural Background**

#### **2.1 What is idiom**

Scholars have been working hard on idioms from varied theoretical points of view and have made somewhat different conclusions with regard to the features of idioms. Despite their difference, there is one thing in common: a great number of

idioms have a figurative sense that cannot be derived from the understanding of the component parts. Chitra Fernando (1996:3) has made a summary of the features of idioms according to what has been most frequently discussed by the other scholars as thus: compositeness, institutionalization and semantic opacity. Compositeness means that idioms are complex lexical items with a composition of at least two lexemes, such as *red herring*, *to smell a rat*, *to cash in on*, *to die hard*, *to make up for*, etc. Institutionalization implies that idioms are conventionalized expressions and have maintained structural stability even if some idioms are grammatically illogical. *Neither fish nor flesh*, for example, can not be restructured as *neither flesh nor fish*, nor *to smell a rat* replaced by *to smell a mouse*, nor *penny wise*, *pound foolish* revised as *penny is wise and pound is foolish*, which is not acceptable by the conventional sense. Semantic opacity means that an idiom can not be understood in its literal sense; its meaning “is not the sum of its constituents” (Fernando, 1996:3). The examples are *to feel one’s ear burning*, *at daggers drawn*, *a nice kettle of fish*, *like the breeze*, *hammer and tongs*, etc. The meanings of the above idioms have nothing to do with “ear”, “dagger”, or “fish”, etc. It is generally accepted that there is no clear-cut demarcation between what is idiom and what is phrase or collocation; idiomaticity is a matter of degree, and idioms show different degrees of semantic opacity.

Idioms are so interesting because they are full of sense of humor and wits and they strike hard in the listener’s mind the message that the speaker intends to convey. As multiword expressions conventionalized in meaning and structure, they are unique and difficult, however, in a sense that their actual meaning is often not identical with their literal meaning. The literal meaning of an idiom often makes little sense and its idiomatic meaning is hard to predict. Even those that seem to make sense in their literal meaning, say, *bread and cheese*, *to buy a white horse*, *chapter and verse*, *to spill the beans*, *to give somebody the sack*, are often misunderstood on condition that the context is absent. This also makes idioms a headache to foreign learners wanting the same familiarity with the English language and the same capacity of decoding the idiomatic meaning from the literal construction. The very value of idioms however, right rests upon their figurative power that is one of the most prominent peculiarities of idioms; the loss of figurative power only leads to the loss of a unique way of expression known as idiom.

## 2.2 What is culture

Culture is socially acquired knowledge and learned pattern of behavior, a common system of standards shared by a speech community for perceiving, evaluating and behaving. “Culture includes the spiritual aspect of a society, embracing its ideological, artistic and religious trends. It may also be understood as a picture of everyday life... Finally, social consciousness, which is expressed in the language of events and processes, institutions and organizations, social values and artistic creativity are also part of culture expressed in the language”(Ronowicz, 1999: 5).

Culture is material and spiritual wealth acquired in the long history of human

experience. From anthropological perspective, the so-to-speak “same culture” is the common habits cultivated among a certain community in a certain geographical position; it is “a generalized possession of the genus Homo”(Kottak, 1991:37). This community develops its own way of living, thinking, and behaving and sets it as criteria for judgment. People of that community stick to their way and transmit it from generation to generation and regard it as the sole criteria to determine what is acceptable and what is not. This special way of the community as shared pattern of behavior can be seen in how they deal with issues in politics, economy, law, arts, social life, personal relationship, family affairs, entertainment, and so on.

### **2.3 Idiom and culture: a relationship**

“Language does not develop in a vacuum”(Lado, 1964:23). It is both a component of culture and a central network through which other components are expressed. Language is crucial in interpreting and classifying human’s experience and perception of the world known as culture. As fruit of culture, language grows, extends and flourishes with the enrichment of culture, and in turn guides the direction in which culture forms. Therefore, culture is the soil that gives birth to and nurtures language; language, as a vehicle of conveying and exchanging message, bears the task of recording, transmitting and shaping culture. Without language, culture is dirt-covered treasure buried underground; without culture, language, losing the function of interpreting culture, is empty signs bearing no meaning. Language is part of culture, “the totality of beliefs and practices of a society”(Nida, 1993:30). Language is also the bearer of culture, the very element that expresses, embodies and symbolizes cultural reality (Kramsch, 2000: 3). Language and culture are inseparable in the very sense that they shape and in turn are shaped by each other; the understanding and study of one requires the acknowledgement of the other.

Language and culture cannot live without each other. So are idioms that are essence of a language and culture. As fruit of wisdom, idioms are effective device for expressing. They are often described to be a form of speech peculiar to a nation. They are attributed to people’s observation of the world and their participation in gregarious activities; they’re culture-bound, “essentially national in character, and taste of the soil from which they grew”(Smith, 1943:278). Accordingly, idioms, born in the soil of a certain culture, are mirrors of that culture. They are indicators of national character, the way people observe, evaluate, and approach nature. They bridge the gap between language and thought with the very device of figuration that makes language expressive of thought. Idioms are vivid, humorous, and powerful and perform “a necessary function in the domestic economy of speech”(Smith, 1943:276).

Language is not self-contained, nor independent of other social elements, neither are idioms whose component parts, though not obviously indicative of their actual meaning, are associated with the cultural background in which they came into being. That’s to say the seeming independence of the idiomatic meaning of the associated words doesn’t justify that they have nothing to do with each other. The component

parts of an idiom witness the historical development of the idiom as a whole for they are the material basis on which the extended meaning is rendered. So the problem of unpredictability and misunderstanding can be better solved through acknowledgement of the cultural background that gave birth to idioms.

## Chapter 3

### Source of English Idioms

Every word has its history, so does every idiom. English language is rich in idiomatic expressions, the formation of which sketches the picture of the cultural environment where they're born: historical development, geographical features, social structure, economic condition, science, arts, customs, folkways, etc. -- they are the soil that stimulates the growth of idioms. English idioms came into being through various channels. One can hardly explain why *a Pyrrhic victory* means "a costly victory", or why *apple of discord* means "the cause of trouble"; or why *Greek's gift* means "gift given with ill intentions". A good knowledge of the source, the origin or the allusions of these idioms shortens the way to correct understanding. This chapter is to present in the following aspects the source of English idioms.

#### 3.1 Bible

*The Bible*, the dominant doctrine of Christianity, has been treasured as valuable record of the European culture. *The Bible* became popular over the western countries with the ever domination of Christianity. It is not only the doctrine of Christianity, but also a book of great literary merit, a book that records the source of western culture in rich, polished, and original language. Many later literary works owe a lot to *the Bible*: in the archetypes of the heroes or the language of the works can be seen the trace of borrowing. The biblical influence on English language is immense without rival, and "for centuries *the Bible* has been the book which has been most read and most quoted in England" (Smith, 1943:223). There are many idiomatic expressions that find their origins in *the Bible* have enriched the word stock of English language with their vividness and wittiness. The following idiomatic expressions are only small bits of them:

*apples of Sodom*  
*to beat the air*  
*milk and honey*  
*feet of clay*  
*the good Samaritan*  
*a crown of glory*

*a*

*daily bread, loaves and fishes*  
*safe and sound*  
*whited sepulchres*  
*a wolf in sheep's clothing*  
*Judas kiss*  
*to kill the fatty calf*



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